CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 18 June 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Roberto García Moritán (Argentina)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 623rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all, I should like to extend a cordial welcome in the Conference to His Exellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Doctor Ali Akbar Velayati, who will be our first speaker at this plenary meeting. The Minister has paid us frequent visits to set out his views on the items before the Conference. His presence today comes at a particularly important moment in our negotiations on the prohibition of all chemical weapons, an issue of top priority on our agenda on which he has specially focused in his statements at the Conference. We all know that he has had very good reasons to do so, as his country has been a victim of the use of those weapons of mass destruction. We are now very close to an agreement for which the Minister has worked since his first visit to the Conference on Disarmament on 16 February 1984. I am certain that we can count on his cooperation to successfully complete our negotiations, in which all the members of the Conference are playing a most active part.

In accordance with the timetable of meetings for this week, the Conference will hold an informal meeting devoted to substantive issues under item 2 of our agenda, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", immediately following this plenary meeting.

On the list of speakers for today are His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the representatives of Spain, Egypt, Venezuela, Morocco and the Russian Federation. I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati.

Mr. VELAYATI (Islamic Republic of Iran): The security landscape of the world has continued to undergo unprecedented transformation since I addressed this Conference last time. The fundamental changes in the basic parameters of international relations today make the contemporary period one of great opportunity as well as considerable challenge. The second war in the Persian Gulf ushered in a new situation. It was only the second time in the history of the United Nations that the United Nations Security Council authorized military enforcement action. Unlike previous occasions, a sort of collective security mechanism entered into action, although not fully in the manner envisaged in the United Nations Charter, which ensures international supervision at all stages.

What are the lessons we can learn? Was this a unique event or will it become a model for the future? What will be the long-term consequences for the international community? This has been the subject of much debate, discussion and analysis. The overriding conclusion, at early stages, was that perhaps this exercise can become more institutionalized and be applied in similar circumstances. Time and events proved otherwise. In no other situation could the Security Council deal effectively with serious cases of crisis and tension. I am coming here from a meeting of the Islamic Conference Organization where I witnessed much anguish and frustration as no decisive action has become possible at the international level in the face of grave violence against the Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The

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discriminatory attitude of the Security Council vis-à-vis different crisis situations has severely tarnished its credibility and made it too unreliable for States to depend upon for threats against their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The two contradictory positions of the Security Council towards two similar, consecutive actions against Iran and Kuwait are far too vivid and too significant in their implications to ever be ignored or forgotten. Indeed, the Security Council, with its structural problems, is still too distant from a body that can safeguard international peace and security. It has also been realized, by now, that the second war in the Persian Gulf, successful as it was in reversing an aggression, did not solve the problems of our region and in certain cases magnified the security dilemma of a number of regional States. Outside interference is severely disturbing the fragile balance in the area. Huge amounts of sophisticated armaments dumped into this region in the last two years have been more a means of extending foreign influence than a source of security. The trend unfortunately continues unabated, directing much-needed resources to finance arms production by foreign Powers instead of the development of the region. Because of the geographic and demographic realities of the region, in a competitive scenario, smaller States tend to rely on external Powers and attempt to purchase security. The only solution is a security system which includes all countries of the region on the basis of cooperation rather than competition. Despite all odds, there are signs that the States of the region are now more prepared to follow this positive direction.

At the global level, the effects of the Persian Gulf war in the long term remain questionable. If the experience is to be used to promote the notion of leaving all decisions to the powerful, which to some extent has been the case, we are setting the stage for a more troubled world right from the start. If, on the other hand, we are to move towards more multilateralism, collectivity of purpose, commonality of security perceptions and concerted international action against all calamities and crises, then we can be more optimistic. The work of this Conference is thus far more significant now than in the past as an accelerated comprehensive approach towards disarmament with practical results contributes directly in putting the new trend in international relations on the right track.

It is unfortunate to witness that in the new international environment we are lagging behind developments. Actions speak louder than words. It is imperative that words be translated into deeds before they lose their credence. The bipolar system has come to an end but still the residual thoughts of outdated nuclear deterrence exist. Those doctrines nurturing such attitudes still form the basis of the strategic thinking of the big Powers. As a result, the nuclear questions at the Conference on Disarmament are almost dead. There seems to prevail a misperception that, with the end of the cold war, everything has been put in place. True, some steps have been taken. Agreements towards nuclear disarmament, including the new pledge of substantive cuts in nuclear arsenals, may be encouraging. Yet we no longer can, or should, look at what is removed, but what remains; and that which remains can still destroy the world many times over.

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It is incomprehensible that in the post-cold-war era, nuclear armaments should still exist at all. What are nuclear weapons for and who are they to deter? Against whom are they perceived to ever be employed? Is it still believed by some that nuclear arms are necessary to enhance the security of individual States or global security? Are nuclear arms considered to be political weapons or something that brings clout and prestige to its possessor? It is all too clear today that there remains no logic behind the possession and acquisition of nuclear weapons. If the momentum is not seized today we shall soon become habituated to the routine presence of nuclear arms on our planet and forced to accept it as a fact of life. There shall thus never be a world free of nuclear weapons. We cannot and must not allow that, as it will run counter to the most common and unified aspirations of the world community. In fact, our efforts should be mobilized so that the existence of nuclear weapons will not spill over to the next millennium. For this, we need agreements in three areas: a commitment by all nuclear-weapon States to destroy all nuclear weapons in their territory or under their jurisdiction or control by the year 2000; a renewed pledge by all States not to acquire and proliferate nuclear weapons or add to their existing stock; a genuine decision to allow enhanced technological cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. There is no reason for this ideal not to become reality if and only if the political will exists. In the meantime, the nuclear-weapon States must agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of these weapons. The accession of China and France to the NPT, a moratorium by certain Powers on 1992 testing, the rendering invalid of the old idea of nuclear deterrence, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Republics, further necessitate giving such assurances.

The successful conclusion of negotiations on a chemical weapons convention has emerged as a real possibility in 1992. The sense that this year will prove to be pivotal in the CWC negotiations has heightened global interest in the effort and stimulated anticipation of a positive result. We have been striving hard for a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. There was, ironically, minimal international attention while our people were being victimized by these weapons and we had to endure severe military implications resulting from their use. Even under the most pressing circumstances we avoided any attempts to acquire these deadly weapons. There was hope that, at last, there would be concerted international action to stop the use of chemical weapons against us. That hope never became reality and the barbarbous weapons were used right through the last stages of the war. It is sad, therefore, to see that the convention approaches its fruition only at the cost of tens of thousands of innocent people. We welcome, nevertheless, that the convention is within reach this year provided that a reasonable balance is struck between the legitimate concerns of all negotiating parties. After eight years of war which caused unimaginable ruin and destruction, we need to devote all our energy and resources to reconstruction. For this any discriminatory restrictions with no relevance to the CWC may cause irreparable adverse effects on our industry and economy.

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But this is clearly not just our concern, as it has been evident that many developing countries share the same view. Article XI, in its final form should ensure access to technology while all restrictions parallel to the convention are removed. Developments in the field of industry should not be hampered, but rather promoted, for the betterment of mankind as the result of the convention. It should also be envisaged to compensate for any restrictions and intrusions imposed through verification procedures.

It is of paramount importance for any arms control and disarmament agreements to have a reliable verification system. There is going to be the first global international verification organization with direct and indirect implications for all aspects of the national life of States. The International Atomic Energy Agency was set up to regulate the peaceful use of nuclear power and does not verify nuclear disarmament in the sense of actual reduction of nuclear weapons. Moreover, no other disarmament treaty involves the control of a whole industry. Constraining widely available dual-use chemicals and technology with both civilian and military applications will be a daunting task. The provisions for verification under article VI should be aimed at confidence-building, while any suspicions of non-compliance should be dealt with under article IX, including challenge inspection. Efforts should be made to avoid a system of verification of chemical industry that may undermine confidence by creating an institutionalized level of suspicion. Excessive verification may possibly have counter-productive confidence-degrading results. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that the costs of verification of industry will be shifted onto prices and, therefore, affect the whole national economies of the developing countries which are the end-users of these chemicals. The indirect costs including security costs, regulation costs and spillage costs will also be borne mainly by the developing countries. Another important factor is the implementation of the convention. One may tend to focus rather too much on the negotiating process in Geneva and too little on what might follow. The trouble-free implementation of the CWC should not be taken for granted. History includes many examples of negotiated measures not being implemented as planned, or at all. In this context, a viable, cost-effective and non-discriminatory verification system turns out to be a determining factor for the future implementation of the CWC. The proposals tabled by 21 developing countries and China are aimed at securing this objective. This, along with other proposals by the G7 indeed present a compromise solution for most important issues that had remained unresolved. I hope to see that this initiative will continue to be studied seriously and considered constructively. Through this, we maintain our hope for the early conclusion of the convention. Efforts should be aimed at arriving at a consensus convention whose universality is guaranteed. In the meantime, it is of the utmost importance to prepare the ground for the entry into force of the convention. Nobody here seeks to conclude the convention this year and await its implementation for many long years as in the case of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. To that end it is imperative, in parallel with intensified negotiations, to work out arrangements to address security concerns of regions. So far as the Middle East countries are concerned, the biggest obstacle in the way of adherence to the CWC is the intransigent aggressiveness of Israel. It is universally acknowledged that Israel possesses undeclared nuclear weapons

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and thus has an effective nuclear monopoly in the area. It is also common knowledge that Israel has the capability to launch biological and chemical warfare. It is, at the same time, party to neither the non-proliferation Treaty nor the 1972 biological weapons Convention. There must be adherence to the NPT and putting all Israeli nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards as well as adherence to the BWC. Steps may then be followed to materialize the idea of a Middle East free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

The question of regulating arms exports and imports is an old issue dating back to the League of Nations. Following the second war in the Persian Gulf, it has again been accorded high priority. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution on transparency in armaments last year, for which the Islamic Republic of Iran cast its positive vote. We also welcome the inscription of the subject on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This exercise since 1919 has not led to any tangible result due to the fact that all factors and elements have not been duly taken into account. The big Powers generally tend to ignore their determining role in thwarting the overarmament of the world. Four fifths of Iraqi weapons had been supplied by three of the permanent members of the Security Council. On the one hand the merits of scaling down arsenals are mentioned, and on the other military contracts worth billions of dollars are being signed. No discriminatory approach to this subject will last long. Transparency in armaments can indeed serve to enhance international security as well as the security of individual States as long as it remains devoid of any discrimination. In our view, in order to have a viable system of transparency in armaments, the following points should be heeded. First, the system should cover both conventional and non-conventional weapons. Second, the United Nations should play a crucial and neutral role in monitoring activities in this field. Third, the military and security agreements between big Powers and the developing countries should be transparent and verified. Fourth, the system should cover holdings and possession as well as transfers of weapons under the jurisdiction or control of any Member State. Fifth, all Member States should play their role in this monitoring system. It should not be monopolized by that handful of States which are more responsible for the present state of affairs. Sixth, monitoring should cover all regions of the world equally. Seventh, military-related technology and the transfer of such technology should be covered by the system. Eighth, the stock piling of weapons in other regions under the pretext of strategic reserves should be avoided. Ninth, foreign military bases or presence in different countries and the amount and type of weapons they possess should be included. In addition, in order to enhance confidence and to reduce threats within regions, it would be desirable to aim at regional arrangements whereby acquisition of arms will be made with prior notice, or perhaps approval, of others. Moreover, the notion that only a few exporting States decide about the security requirements of others and on that basis arrange their military scales will have counter-productive and damaging effects on the plausible idea of "more for butter than for guns". It should, therefore, be altogether avoided. In conclusion, let me wish you all success in discharging your weighty responsibilities at the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. PEREZ-VILLANUEVA (Spain) (translated from Spanish): It is almost superfluous to say that it is a source of singular satisfaction for me to take the floor in this room under your presidency, Sir, as you represent a country that is much loved by all Spaniards and especially myself. We have also had the opportunity over the past two years of establishing bonds of friendship with you, and noting in a very direct way your professional skills and your ability to discharge the duties of a Chairman at a time which is particularly difficult, particularly crucial and especially important for the work of this Assembly, which Spain views from the angle, I would venture to say if the formula existed, of a permanent observer.

I would not wish to forget to welcome the presence among us today of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, who has once again honoured us with his presence today. His visits are frequent, for which my delegation and my country are grateful to him. I had an opportunity to welcome him to Madrid a few years ago, and consequently I am pleased to note the interest he displays in visiting this Conference frequently.

Today, as I was saying, I will if I may briefly outline to this assembly a new experience carried out by Spain in an area that is still at the focus of interest in the negotiations on chemical weapons, and I will do so briefly because, I acknowledge, the Spanish experience is perhaps of greater interest at another time in the negotiations than it is today. However, I would like to stress that I am submitting it to this assembly on behalf of my Government with the conviction and in the belief that it might be useful at this point in time and properly demonstrate the interest of Spain, my country, in the convention on chemical weapons, firstly, and secondly might show that my country's commitment to the text of a future, and I hope immediate, convention on chemical weapons remains firm and resolute.

Almost a year ago, Spain had the honour of submitting to this Conference on Disarmament the results of a first trial inspection carried out in a chemical plant, following the procedure that was then taking shape for routine inspections. At the time I announced that, under the plan envisaged by my Government, a new trial inspection would be carried out in accordance with the terms and provisions laid down for challenge inspections. This inspection, moreover, would be carried out on an undeclared military facility. Accordingly, I now have pleasure, in keeping with the plan in force since then, in submitting to you, Sir, and the participants in this Conference the results of Spain's experience with a challenge inspection on an undeclared military facility, which are contained in a report that has been allocated the symbol CD/1152.

I should say from the outset that the task was not an easy one, and called for coordinated efforts on the part of various agencies, although for perhaps this very reason it has been very useful indeed as a source of enlightenment for my Government, the Spanish armed forces and my delegation. In order to make this as useful an exercise as possible, it was decided from the beginning not to spare any human or material resources, and to choose as complex a military facility as possible and one that would be appropriate for

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a credible mock challenge involving a member of the future treaty on chemical weapons. The choice fell on a large multipurpose military base with a wide variety of buildings and facilities ranging from the simple storage of munitions to research in that area and the safekeeping of sensitive weapons. The detailed analysis of the phases and the most salient features of this inspection produced, as I have said, a great deal of information that is directly applicable to our own experience in this area, and to analysis of the practicablity of the provisions of the treaty, as we now know it and as it is now taking shape.

The following are some of the findings of the trial inspection. First of all, challenge inspection is both indispensable and also an instrument of last resort. No routine inspection by the permanent organization could ever resolve the well-founded and legitimate doubts that a member country of the treaty might have at a given point in time because of the attitude of another with regard to compliance with obligations entered into. But challenge inspection has to be an exercise of last resort, because of the inherent risks for the challenging country, which takes on a heavy responsibility vis-à-vis the international community in denouncing another State party which is already, in that capacity subject to other verification measures. In addition, the difficulties generated by an inspection of this type in practice confirm this status as a last resort.

Secondly, the time elapsing between notification of the challenge and the effective commencement of the inspection by a team sent by the organization must be as short as possible. Otherwise the inspection itself would become meaningless, a costly, gratuitously intrusive and ultimately futile exercise. It is difficult to accept, for example, at the end of the twentieth century, that for purely geographical reasons the time-frame for the transfer of inspectors from the point of entry to the actual facility to be inspected should have to be as long as we have heard proposed in our debates on occasion. The national security of the challenged State offers more justification for an extension of the time-frame, but even in that case there are instruments which in our experience make it possible to minimize the total amount of time that the inspectors would take to get down properly to their task.

Thirdly, the observer of the challenging State, who participated in this exercise raised definite difficulties. One observation at the outset: it is difficult to imagine an exceptional procedure like this one, triggered at the prompting of a member country, being carried out without the slightest participation of the latter. If the aim of the challenge inspection is to allay the legitimate fears of a country, logic dictates that it is essential for the observer to be present, as the representative of that country, who has to carry out a very strictly circumscribed function. This is precisely where the difficulty lies, in precisely defining those limits. The observer is indispensable, but if he is present to an "excessive" extent during the inspection this could distort its very purpose and could lead the inspected State to refuse to accept the team of inspectors.

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In the Spanish experience the observer encouraged the activities of the team of inspectors, and observed their work, but did not control the conduct of the inspection. He was kept constantly informed, but his opinion was not decisive, nor, of course, did he cast a veto on any concrete action by the team of inspectors. A witness, yes, but not an inspector.

Fourthly, the system of managed access to the inspected facility proved particularly useful. Specifically, it helped greatly to alleviate the difficulties involved in determining the final perimeter - difficulties that seemed serious at first sight. In particular, and as an example, the random access for the team of inspectors to a number of large tunnels that have been dug out of the mountainside for storing gunpowder and sensitive material, which are equipped with "suspicious" systems of forced-draught and filtered ventilation, enabled them in this case to ascertain that the tunnels did not conceal anything that was contrary to the treaty. And this would also be possible in a real inspection. Even so, it is especially important to limit access to information obtained by the inspectors to a strict minimum number of persons and grades in the permanent organization. Important or unimportant information, on the staff or equipment of the inspected facility, maps, the exact geographical location, communications and so on. All this is the exclusive property of the inspected State and there seems to be no reason for this type of data to be publicized improperly.

Fifthly, challenge inspections are expensive. Spain easily quantified the direct costs of this type of exercise. The indirect costs are obviously more difficult to pin down, such as the man-hours of civil servants and military personnel which are therefore difficult to put into figures, but are undoubtedly worked, and must be taken into account. But these costs are part of the price that Spain is prepared to pay for the security provided by this type of inspection in the framework of an effective verification system under the provisions of the convention.

Spain rounded off this exercise with the conclusion that the pros far outweigh the cons, but it also had the opportunity to note something that I have already pointed out in the past, which has proved to be of particular importance: that challenge inspections must as far as possible be carried out with the active and wholly willing cooperation of the inspected State, which must have an interest in demonstrating full compliance with the provisions of the treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Spain for his statement as well as the pleasant references he made to relations between our two countries and the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

Before calling on our next speaker, I should like to announce that the Chair has received news that one of our most distinguished colleagues, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, Dr. Rasaputram, is attending a plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament today for the last time as head of his country's delegation, and that regrettably he will not be able to be with us for the whole of the meeting this morning. For that reason, I should like to say on

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behalf of all of us that Ambassador Rasaputram's passage through the Conference on Disarmament has left a very clear imprint on the negotiations - both in guiding statements and in specific initiatives of relevance to the items before the Conference on Disarmament. On my own behalf I should like to add that the work of Dr. Rasaputram has also been particularly important in the sphere of the General Assembly, where for many years he coordinated the adoption of an important resolution in the area of the prevention of the arms race in outer space. I would like on behalf of all of us to extend our gratitude to Ambassador Rasaputram and Mrs. Rasaputram and wish them every success both professionally and personally. We are sure that in his future duties Ambassador Rasaputram will apply the same human skills and professional qualities as those we have seen in Geneva. I now give the floor to Ambassador Rasaputram of Sri Lanka.

Mr. RASAPUTRAM (Sri Lanka): Mr. President, thank you for your kind words. First of all, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for this month. Having done such excellent work on outer space, you have shown professional abilities in conducting these sessions in the most able manner, and I am very pleased that you are presiding over the session on the last day I am in the CD. I have been here for three years. When I came I was practically in the seat just opposite the seat I am occupying today, so I have gone practically half the way round the square and, during this period, we have seen much progress. I remember the work done by Ambassador Hyltenius and Ambassador Batsanov in chemical weapons, culminating in the work that is being carried out today by Ambassador von Wagner, and in this particular area we are hoping that it will be a complete success before the end of this year. I remember once Ambassador Batsanov at a dinner party wanted a prediction as to when the chemical weapons convention could be completed. I think I did the prediction quite well when I said that it might be completed by the year 1992 - I think he has this prediction in his purse even now. I must also thank my colleagues for the excellent support and cooperation given to us during my stay here. I must also say that the secretariat, under the leadership of Ambassador Berasategui, gave me full assistance and cooperation during the term I was presiding over the session, for which I am really grateful. We are hopeful that all these matters regarding disarmament will come to the CD rather than being discussed outside the CD, thus the CD's importance will be enhanced in the future. Let me finally thank you, Sir, for giving me this time, interrupting this particular session and giving me this valuable time to make this very brief statement.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the Ambassador of Sri Lanka for his statement, and we wish him every success. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to welcome you again as President of the Conference on Disarmament during this crucial period of its deliberations. I wish you every success in your undertaking and am confident that your wisdom and experience will indeed enable you to succeed in discharging the task most admirably. As the end of your mission approaches as representative of Argentina, a friendly country with which Egypt has strong relations, I hope

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you will allow me to express to you our sincerest appreciation and gratitude for the excellent and positive contributions you have made to the work of this Conference throughout your term as representative of Argentina to the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you success in your other high-level undertakings in your country.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Abdelhamid Semichi, the permanent representative of Algeria and its representative at the Conference on Disarmament, for the wisdom he displayed during his earlier presidency of the Conference. I learned only today that the mission and term in Geneva of Ambassador Rasaputram, the representative of Sri Lanka at the Conference on Disarmament, have almost ended and that he is about to assume other tasks. I would like to take this opportunity to express to him the sincere appreciation of the Egyptian delegation for all his positive proposals and splendid contributions on all the subjects covered at the Conference on Disarmament during his mission. I express to him the sincere appreciation of my delegation for his continued cooperation with us, which illustrates the excellent relations that exist between his country and Egypt, and wish him full success in the new post he is to take up in his country's service after leaving Geneva. It gives me pleasure to take this opportunity to welcome His Excellency Dr Ali Akbar Velayati, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the occasion of his visit to this Conference, and to congratulate him on the valuable statement which he gave to the Conference today.

Both Ambassador Enahi, the permanent representative of India, and the representative of Kenya earlier expressed the views of 19 non-aligned States during the meeting of the Conference on 27 February 1992, in document CD/PV.612, concerning the second and third items on the agenda, namely Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament, and Prevention of nuclear war. The Egyptian delegation, however, wishes to add some relevant points as confirmation of its concern with these two important items which affect the peace and security of mankind. The interest of the Conference on Disarmament in the current negotiations on the draft convention on a chemical weapons ban, which are currently in their final stages, should not be to the detriment of our concern with the nuclear items. These nuclear items have been included in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament as a reflection of the will of the international community to provide a suitable framework by regarding the Conference on Disarmament as the sole negotiating forum in the United Nations to deal with questions of disarmament. Nuclear weapons are considered to be the most dangerous weapons to threaten the peace and security of all mankind. To that effect, General Assembly resolution 1653 of 1961 stated that the use of nuclear weapons is contrary to the laws of humanity and constitutes a crime against civilization. As long as nuclear weapons remain a threat it is the responsibility of this Conference to expose, confront and suppress this danger. This is the genesis of items 2 and 3. We wish to put on record our regret that the Conference has so far been unable to establish ad hoc committees for these two items notwithstanding the submission of a draft mandate on item 2 by the Group of 21 on 27 July 1989, contained in document CD/819/Rev.1, and of a further draft mandate on establishing a committee on item 3, contained in document CD/515/Rev.5.

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The international community has, over the past years, taken solid steps towards the objectives and purposes of nuclear disarmament. Primarily, we wish to welcome the concrete measures adopted and the positive agreements concluded during this period; they are undoubtedly steps in the right direction. Among these achievements is the signing of the INF Treaty, followed by the START agreement, in which Washington and Moscow pledged substantial reductions in long-range strategic nuclear missiles and intercontinental missiles. This was followed by further positive measures in September 1991 undertaken by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, and last but not least, the recent agreement between Presidents Bush and Yeltsin in Washington to make further significant reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the two countries, particularly multiple-warhead intercontinental ballistic and other nuclear missiles, by the year 2003. We hope to obtain additional information on this agreement so that it can be taken into account in our deliberations at this Conference. We also hope that similar steps will be taken by the other nuclear States in order to produce what can be described as "an impending race to disarm as opposed to an arms race".

I have mentioned this on previous occasions on behalf of Egypt, particularly in the discussions in the First Committee during the forty-seventh General Assembly. These steps have created a propitious international climate and have helped to improve mutual trust-building and diminished for the first time in a long while the risk of nuclear war breaking out. This spurred NATO, on 17 October 1991, to dismantle 700 nuclear warheads and to destroy 50 per cent of the nuclear warheads stockpiled in Europe.

These measures have extended to another field, namely conventional weapons in Europe, and I refer specifically to the Paris Charter which contains important provisions that will take European security into new horizons. We have followed the changes which have altered the political map of what was known as the Soviet Union and seen the emergence of the new Commonwealth of independent republics. The question now is: as we approach the twenty-first century, does the world of today need the huge quantities of nuclear weapons which remain stockpiled? What is the point of the policy of nuclear deterrence still upheld by some nuclear States while we are taking unremitting steps towards collective security? If we speak of nuclear deterrence, against whom is it needed? This leads to another question on the usefulness of continuing nuclear testing with the aim of developing advanced modern generations of nuclear weapons, or of testing their suitability for use. International peace and security cannot be realized through stockpiling nuclear weapons. The maintenance of international peace and security is not based on a fragile balance of deterrent capacity and strategic balance. In fact, genuine peace can only exist in a world where cohesion and cooperation reigns among nations.

The Earth Summit which concluded its work a few days ago in Rio de Janeir demonstrated that the international agenda is fraught with new problems which, if not solved, will destroy the natural balance and the future of all mankind. We are therefore calling for the enormous cost and the available financial and human resources which are still devoted to armament to be mobilized for economic and social development, particularly in the developing countries,

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which are in dire need of finance. In this respect, we hope to reach agreement on a system banning the transfer and export of conventional arms to countries around the world as a preliminary step towards the major Powers setting an example in the reduction of military expenditure and operating on the basis of a security system with minimum levels of armament. This is an example that should be followed by all other countries, particularly the developing ones.

The recent arms control agreements must not decrease our enthusiasm or slow down our efforts to deal with disarmament and arms control issues. We are consequently calling for a more active role for the United Nations in the field of disarmament, especially in the nuclear field, and for a halt to all nuclear tests, including those conducted underground. Such tests contribute to vertical proliferation and qualitative development, especially after the NPT has dealt with preventing horizontal proliferation.

Egypt has advocated the vital importance of an active role for the United Nations in establishing demilitarized zones around the world. In the proper context of the General Assembly of the United Nations and in conjuction with Iran, Egypt presented an initiative in 1974 to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This initiative has enjoyed consensus in the successive sessions of the General Assembly since 1980. I am concerned to refer particularly to the resolution passed at the forty-fifth session on a report from the Secretary-General containing a study by a group of experts on effective and verifiable measures which would facilitate the establishment of such a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East (document A/45/435 dated 10 October 1990). Moreover, on 8 April 1990, President Hosny Mubarak presented an initiative whereby the region of the Middle East would be declared an area free of all weapons of mass destruction and emphasized the following: first, the banning of all weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, chemical and biological - from the Middle East without exception. Second, all countries in the region without exception should make reciprocal simultaneous commitments in this regard. Third, the establishment and application of effective verification measures to ascertain full compliance without exception by all countries in the region with the comprehensive framework of this ban.

I listened with great interest and appreciation to the support of the Western Group as expressed by Sir Michael Weston, Ambassador of the United Kingdom, on 10 June 1992 - last week - for President Mubarak's initiative to declare the Middle East an area free of all weapons of mass destruction, and wish to express my delegation's satisfaction at that support. I would like to see international efforts united in realizing the objectives of the Egyptian proposal aimed primarily at avoiding risk and tension in the Middle East, thus paving the way for mutual confidence, Egypt having realized the danger confronting the area due to the accumulation of such arms. This proposal reflects once more Egypt's wish to contribute in presenting practical and constructive solutions to counter any future threat to the area.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

Based on these premises, the Foreign Minister of Egypt, Mr. Amre Moussa, addressed a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (document A/46/329 and Security Council document S/22855) regarding Egypt's position on the initiatives for arms control and disarmament. In the letter, he highlighted ideas held by Egypt on enhancing the security of the Middle East countries through the lowest level of armament and a qualitative and quantitative balance between the military capabilities of all States in the region. The continuation of the present qualitative and quantitative inequality between the military capabilities of the countries in the region is a matter that should not be allowed to continue in an area stricken by tension. On these grounds, Egypt supports the current peace process in the Middle East which was launched at the Madrid Conference in October 1991, a process directed towards establishing a just, comprehensive and durable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict so as to ensure security in the area and provide prosperity and development for all of its peoples.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement as well as for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Arteaga.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, it is a source of special satisfaction for the delegation of Venezuela to see you, my very distinguished friend, presiding over the work of the Conference. We have followed closely, and with admiration, your outstanding career as an Argentine diplomat committed to the loftiest Latin American causes, and we certainly appreciate the valuable contribution that you have made and are making to efforts towards disarmament in this and other forums, so please be assured of our full cooperation in the same spirit of cooperation that has always characterized relations between our countries, Argentina and Venezuela. We should also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Semichi of Algeria for his performance as President of the Conference in the previous term. We also endorse the words with which you so aptly expressed feelings of regret on behalf of the Conference at the departure of Ambassador Rasaputram of Sri Lanka, to whom we wish every success.

In the statement I am going to make, I should like to refer very briefly to the question of chemical weapons. The Conference on Disarmament is moving towards the conclusion of work relating to the draft convention on the prohibition of these weapons. At this time we must strive to resolve rapidly the problems still outstanding in these negotiations, namely the issues of challenge inspection, verification, the composition of the executive council, economic and technological development, old and abandoned chemical weapons and financial aspects of the organization. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee has been unstinting in his persistent efforts. He has provided us with a restructured text of the draft convention which has enjoyed our careful

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Verification is one of the central pillars of the future convention. It is in everyone's interest that this system should be as effective as possible. Effective does not necessarily mean excessively costly. We should achieve a balanced cost-effectiveness ratio through the system to be adopted. Otherwise we would run the risk of creating very complex machinery which might lead to an excessive and even unnecessary number of inspections and a heavy financial burden which developing countries would find it hard to shoulder. The issue at hand, rather, is to create a system designed, through its various aspects, to ensure the effective application of the convention, including its persuasive nature, and to verify those activities that can really be considered as being in breach of the convention, or capable of being steered in that direction.

But the convention should guarantee and respect the right of developing countries to chemical industry development for peaceful purposes. Concrete provisions on economic and technological development and international cooperation in the peaceful applications of chemical activities have been included in the draft convention. We hope that the problems outstanding in these negotiations will soon be solved. We reiterate the need to adopt a system designed to ensure the unlimited peaceful development thereof.

In respect of the question of costs, the delegation of Venezuela supports the inclusion in the draft convention of clear provisions on the responsibility devolving upon countries possessing chemical weapons to cover the costs relating to the destruction of their stockpiles and production facilities, as well as their verification, without losing sight, of course, of existing bilateral agreements on this subject. We understand that the organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons should play a role in this context, but it should also be clear that there are many countries that have not produced such weapons.

Equitable representation of all parties is an essential element which should characterize the composition of the future decision-making body of the convention, the executive council. We express our gratitude to the Ambassador of Hungary, Tibor Tóth, for the efforts he is making to find a common formula. Because of the particular character of the future convention, the "industrial" element can hardly be discarded. None the less, we believe that this is not the fundamental principle. It is necessary to seek a proper balance between the latter and a fair equitable geographical representation on the Council.

We wish to express, as the official position of the Government of Venezuela, our support for The Hague as the headquarters of the future organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Little time is left to us. Let us avail ourselves of this opportunity to respond decisively to the expectations of the international community. Let us

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Venezuela for his statement, as well as for the very kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Morocco, Ambassador Benhima.

Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, I would like first of all to extend to you the congratulations of my delegation following your accession to the post of President of the Conference, whose functions you are discharging with your well-known skill. The active role that you have played for many years in enriching our thinking and your wide diplomatic skill guarantee success in the performance of the task that you are taking up. To your predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Semichi of Algeria, my delegation expresses its gratitude for the dedication, accessibility and open-mindedness that he showed during the preceding term.

As I am taking the floor for the first time since their arrival, I would like to welcome Ambassadors Tanaka of Japan and Weston of the United Kingdom. I would also like to express on behalf of my delegation our satisfaction at seeing Ambassador Berasategui carrying out the functions of Secretary-General of our Conference, and we would like to congratulate him most warmly for his appointment and wish him every success in his lofty tasks. Lastly, my delegation welcomes the presence of Mr. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and wishes Ambassador Vaezgourmam who is coming to the end of his assignment in Geneva, every success in his new functions.

While it is appropriate to welcome the decisions taken recently by the major Powers concerning the dismantling of the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction that have threatened the planet for many years, the absence of any progress in disarmament at the multilateral level jeopardizes the credibility of the Conference. In the past, the confrontation between Blocs might have justified the deadlock that marked our work. But changes of historic scope have occurred; they have significantly changed the international political situation and thus have created conditions for the Conference that could lead to substantial breakthroughs.

In this context, which is favourable to a stepping up of our work, we would like to emphasize the need to strengthen the role of the Conference, whose effectiveness depends on its capacity to negotiate disarmament agreements in all areas of its mandate. At this stage I would like to quote His Majesty King Hassan II, who, speaking at the Security Council summit last January, stated that the strengthening of the United Nations and the enhancement of its role in maintaining international peace and security required the international community to address disarmament matters seriously. An enhanced awareness of this priority and a more determined political will to deal with it could strengthen our hopes that the series of

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

In this context, my delegation shares the view that the cornerstone of the future convention should be an adequate system for verification of compliance with the obligations arising out of the treaty. Only a system that is strict but at the same time free of abuses could create confidence among States parties when inspections are being carried out. Inspection procedures must scrupulously respect the objectives and purpose of the treaty. They cannot in any way be used for partisan purposes beyond the limits specified in the convention. Nevertheless, in order to guarantee the credibility of such operations, the bodies entrusted with inspection should have the necessary capabilities that will enable them to make a proper evaluation of compliance with the terms of the treaty. In other words, verification operations in their diverse forms should not lead to any misunderstanding that would be prejudicial to one or other of the parties involved.

These are the principles which we think should be taken into consideration for the success of the difficult negotiations dealing with verification. In the final analysis, my delegation considers that a climate of confidence and cooperation should prevail in the conduct of verification operations, and in our view this should come to the forefront in the texts and articles concerning this aspect of the treaty.

The banning of chemical weapons should not lead to the placing of obstacles along the path of the development of research and the expansion of production in civilian chemical industries for peaceful purposes of development and cooperation. My delegation considers that this is a vital issue in the negotiations, and we hope, moreover, that the entry into force of the future treaty will constitute a qualitative step forward in this area and that all obstacles will be removed in order to build up true confidence among the parties. We also see in this the most appropriate means of ensuring the universality of the treaty.

Likewise, the executive council will have a task that is no less important. Consequently, its membership should reflect the necessary balance among the various parts of the world. From this point of view, geographical criteria should be preponderant in the allocation of seats. Nor can we ignore the presence of parties with specific interests, such as those with developed chemical industries. Nevertheless, my delegation would like to underscore the special interest it attaches to the principle of rotation, which should ensure that everyone has an opportunity to sit on the Council.

My delegation wishes to congratulate Ambassador von Wagner, who is making major efforts to ensure the success of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. His open-mindedness and the commitment to compromise which inspires him will, we are convinced, help overcome the difficulties that still exist. We would also

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

have a positive impact on the establishment of the machinery whose task it will be to ensure the application of the convention. We would therefore like to thank the delegations of Finland, Germany and the Netherlands that are carrying out such a necessary task.

I have an opportunity today to confirm on behalf of my Government that Morocco does not possess any chemical weapons and has no intention of producing or acquiring any. In addition, my Delegation intends to become an original party to the future convention.

No one can question the great importance of nuclear disarmament and the consequent obligations falling on our Conference. The work dealing with chemical weapons should not lessen our determination to make progress on this issue of vital importance for the future of mankind. The time has come to better organize our endeavour to make the Conference on Disarmament play a more active role as far as nuclear disarmament is concerned. The developments in international relations, however encouraging they are, require us to be vigilant because the risk remains that the process might go awry or that there might be a confrontation, and it is our responsibility to stimulate further efforts at the multilateral level. In this connection, my Delegation wishes to draw attention to the crucial importance of a complete ban on nuclear tests. The work carried out by our Conference on this issue, despite its limited nature, has shown the priority that should be given to a ban on such tests. Their continuation gives further impetus to the nuclear arms race, in both its quantitative and its qualitative aspects. A treaty completely banning nuclear tests is therefore essential to the goal of genuine, verified nuclear disarmament. Important statements were made on this matter during the first part of the current session of the Conference. We welcome in particular those made by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Russia and Germany, who called for the negotiation of a treaty in this area. Likewise, the announcement made recently by the French Government that it was suspending its tests in the Pacific will promote the objectives pursued by the Conference and should be welcomed. All these steps offer the Conference on Disarmament an historic opportunity that it must grasp in order to embark on genuine negotiations on what has now become a priority issue, because the threat of nuclear proliferation will persist in the absence of concrete results in this area of decisive significance for international security.

Because of their scale, issues related to nuclear weapons constitute a challenge that goes beyond the real or alleged security needs in a given region or between different powers. The clearly understood interest of the international community as a whole urges us to remove all risks of nuclear confrontation by controlling the factors promoting proliferation, both horizontal and vertical, on the understanding that the principle of the complete banning of this type of weapon will remain the final objective in

(Mr. Benhima, Morocco)

our efforts in order to make nuclear disarmament irreversible, and the Conference on Disarmament as the multilateral body with a mandate in this area must participate effectively in this action by setting up the necessary machinery which will enable it to work for the achievement of the progress expected of it by the international community.

We note with bitterness the absence of progress on a large part of the Conference's agenda, despite the numerous relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly urging the commencement of appropriate international negotiations to give disarmament specific content. The procedural steps taken by the Conference on the questions concerning outer space, radiological weapons or negative security assurances have not achieved their goal - the conclusion of international agreements of a universal character in all these areas. This legal vacuum combined with the dazzling scientific and technological innovations in these sectors suggest that preventive measures are urgently necessary to fill these gaps. This is where our most decisive task lies for the future of this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Batsanov.

Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to express profound satisfaction at seeing you in the post of leader of our work. You have long since proved yourself as one of our most experienced colleagues who is thoroughly conversant with all the subtleties of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, and that is perhaps one of the explanations for your brilliant success in guiding our work now while combining this duty with extremely active work at the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Of course, I wish you every success in future as well. I should also like to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Seeichi, who performed the duties of President of the Conference and did so very successfully in the last working month.

It gives me special pleasure today to take the floor on behalf of the delegations of Russia and the United States to announce that President Yeltsin and President Bush concluded an important agreement yesterday in Washington in two areas of vital importance to both our countries and the whole world. This agreement will lead to a further reduction in our nuclear arsenals to well below the totals agreed to only last summer in the START Treaty. The total number of strategic nuclear weapons for both sides will be reduced from 21,000 to 6-7,000. This target will be accomplished in two phases. Under the first phase, deployed warheads for each side will be reduced to between 3,800 and 4,250. In the second phase, the total number of strategic nuclear weapons for each side will drop down to between 3,000 and 3,500 warheads.

(Mr. Batsanov, Russian Federation)

requirements. The second phase will be completed no later than the year 2003, and may be completed as early as the year 2000 if the United States can assist Russia in the required destruction of ballistic missile systems.

Thus, within five months it has become possible to agree on much more significant reductions than those agreed upon after 15 years of START negotiations. In the near future, Russia and the United States will formalize the agreement in a brief treaty document that will be signed by the Presidents of both countries and submitted for ratification in the two countries.

The two Presidents also agreed to work together along with other interested States to develop a concept for global protection against limited nuclear missile attack. A senior group will be established to explore practical steps towards that end, including such areas as early warning and cooperation in developing ballistic missile defence capabilities and technologies. This group will also explore the development of a legal basis for cooperation, including new treaty agreements, and possible changes to existing treaties and agreements. The senior group will hold its first meeting in Moscow within the next 30 days.

The prohibition of chemical weapons was another important subject discussed at the summit. The discussion resulted in a joint statement on chemical weapons, the text of which I shall read in English, since the final version of the Russian text is not available to us yet.

(continued in English)

"President Bush and President Yeltsin stressed their continuing commitment to the global elimination of chemical weapons. They expressed their conviction that the Geneva negotiations on a multilateral convention banning chemical weapons can be concluded by the end of August. They agreed to instruct their representatives accordingly, and called on all participants in the negotiations to do their utmost to achieve this goal. They expressed the hope that a ministerial meeting could be convened in that time-frame to approve the convention.

"The two leaders underscored their support for the 1989 Wyoming Joint Memorandum on phased confidence-building measures in the area of chemical weapons destruction, and agreed to implement the new, cooperative provisions for detailed data exchanges and inspections included in the Joint Memorandum as soon as arrangements can be completed. They also agreed that the June 1990 bilateral chemical weapons destruction agreement would be updated and brought into force promptly."

(continued in Russian)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the [illegible] of the Russian Federation for his statement as well as the kind words he addressed to me. I have no further speakers on my list for today. I recognize the United States delegation and I call on the distinguished Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Prior to his statement just concluded on arms control results of the Russian-American summit, Ambassador Batsanov spoke also on my behalf of our high regard for you, Mr. President, and for your predecessor, Ambassador Semichi.

I have a brief statement to make, on instruction from my authorities in Washington, concerning the issue of Yugoslavia's status in the Conference on Disarmament. We call your attention to Security Council resolution 757 of 30 May 1992, which noted: "The claim by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to continue automatically the membership of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the United Nations has not been generally accepted". The United States firmly believes that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia no longer exists. Furthermore, we do not consider Serbia Montenegro to be the continuation of, or sole successor to, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Accordingly, the position of the United States is that Serbia Montenegro is not entitled to assume the seat of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international organizations, including the Conference on Disarmament. The United States also believes that this issue needs to be resolved first in the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly, and that the Conference on Disarmament should be guided by their disposition of the issue.

Mr. KEYTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Since the distinguished Ambassador of the United States has spoken on the subject of Yugoslavia, I wish to recall the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium on 14 May on behalf of certain Western delegations, including my own. I wish to state that the position of my delegation remains as set out in that statement.

Mr. DIMITRIJEVIC (Yugoslavia): Since I am taking the floor for the first time in this august body, allow me, Mr. President, to express to you the sincere congratulations of my delegation, and to extend to you our full support in the exercise of your important duty. We are proud to have in you such a good and knowledgeable friend. My congratulations and support are equally addressed to the Secretary-General of our Conference, His Excellency Ambassador Berasategui, known as an outstanding diplomat of friendly democratic Argentina.

The statement of His Excellency Mr. Velayati, the Foreign Minister of Iran, whom we welcome in our Conference, reminded me of the old saying

(Mr. Dimitrijevic, Yugoslavia)

wrong perception of historic and political interests of one's own people. But there is no link whatsoever between events there and those which took place in the time of the Gulf crisis. Every better-educated student of international relations and of international law can tell that to His Excellency Mr. Velayati. I suggest to my colleagues from the delegation of Iran, with whom my delegation and I maintain very friendly relations, to seek proper advice from their experts in international law and international relations. We, on our part, are ready to extend that expertise as well. I do apologise to you, Mr. President, to the distinguished Ambassadors and to my colleagues, since in this august body the Conference on Disarmament, only the words of wisdom and the will to contribute to the elimination of the sources of confrontations in the world should be addressed and heard. We have another saying: "When one's roof is in flames, do not add to the trouble." Precisely because of those convictions, I decided to depart from our agenda since His Excellency Mr. Velayati had made that choice himself. Allow me to conclude with very warm support and welcome for the extraordinary agreement between the Presidents of the United States and democratic Russia. This is to be seen as a new source of inspiration for the successful outcome of our efforts in this Conference, particularly with regard to the speedy conclusion of the convention on the chemical weapons ban.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I have no more speakers on the list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Azikiwe.

Mr. AZIKIWE (Nigeria): I will be very brief, Mr. President, you will recall that last Monday Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan, in his capacity as a friend of the Chair, had informal consultations with the individual heads of delegations on the outstanding issue of the future headquarters of the organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to thank him for his tremendous efforts in carrying out this delicate assignment. Another consultation has been scheduled for tomorrow, Friday, in which my delegation will participate. We have no doubt that the positive work achieved so far will bring about consensus choice. At this stage, Mr. President, I wish to announce that I have been instructed by my Government, Nigeria, to support the Dutch offer to host the future headquarters of the organization in The Hague.

Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran): Since issues were raised vis-à-vis the statement made by my Minister, I wish to mention a few points. Mr. Velayati's speech was mainly an effort to contribute to our negotiations on the CWC. We thought that almost everyone present here had noticed that the lecture was, for this purpose, very technically oriented, and I only wish to register my delegation's surprise at the political interpretation of that lecture. We wish to request delegations to read the text which was distributed more carefully.

(The President)

President offers is that of imposing a closing statement on delegations attending the plenary, and I will try to do so with a minimum of frills. The end of a term of office that has been so short and also so busy, thanks to the tireless efficiency of the secretariat, does not, however, seem to lend itself to substantial or excessively profound reflections about the events of the past four weeks. After all, no historical cycle has been completed in these weeks and there have been no dramatic changes in the international situation, for better or for worse. Yet I would like to highlight briefly certain facts that I think have been of interest in this very special period of time for the Conference, as seen from the particular vantage point of this podium.

(The President)

have to put some order in our work and make headway in those areas where conceptual clarity is greater so that a start can be made on pre-negotiating work, subsequently moving on to broach other subjects. I also think that in 1993, as I said in my opening statement, the Conference on Disarmament should give satisfaction to those States which are not members of the Conference and which for a long time now have been waiting for the honouring of a commitment that all of us assumed quite some time ago, which is the enlargement of our body. To my mind the Conference should give a very clear and prompt indication on this matter, and perhaps we should all give some thought to the desirability of giving a clear indication in our report to the General Assembly this year.

Four weeks ago I said that serving as President involved, inter alia, much to do with chance and administrative routine. There is nothing wrong with that. Indeed, sometimes leaving things to chance gives good results. As from the next plenary meeting your work will be guided by the Australian delegation through our friend Ambassador Peter O'Sullivan. It would really be a good idea to await the fruit of chance. If the Conference on Disarmament entrusted the responsibility of chairing certain posts for the presidency of a country which, like Australia, has participated so much in these negotiations and which has, therefore, transformed the psychological atmosphere in these negotiations in the space of one plenary meeting, I agreed by most sincere hopes that this will happen. For my part, on my behalf and on behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank you all for having facilitated my work. To the Secretary-General and his staff for efficient team of assistants, as always, the thanks of the Argentine delegation. I leave this podium and return to my seat.

The secretariat has distributed today the timetable of meetings that the Conference and its subsidiary bodies will hold during the coming week. The timetable has been prepared in consultation with the chairmen of the subsidiary bodies; it is merely indicative and can be amended if necessary. In that regard, I would like to inform you that there are no speakers on the list for the next plenary meeting. In consultation with the incoming President, Ambassador O'Sullivan, we have agreed to recommend to the Conference that if there are no delegations that have put their names down before tomorrow, Friday, at 5 p.m., Tuesday's plenary meeting will be automatically cancelled and the Conference will hold only the informal meeting that is indicated in the timetable under the item entitled "Transparency in armaments". On this understanding, and if there are no objections, I shall take it that the Conference approves the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I call on the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Batsanov.

Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): I apologize

(Mr. Batsanov, Russian Federation)

circulated previously, but I have only just noticed it. Next to the entry for the meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, we have asterisks everywhere in this timetable of meetings indicating that these will be meetings with interpretation. We all know that there are many meetings within the chemical weapons negotiations that now take place without interpretation. However, when these meetings are set alongside meetings of other ad hoc committees, the question might arise of whether the other meetings have interpretation or not. But again we all know the reply, and I am not asking for a clarification on this point; we simply do not understand whether this asterisk refers to this particular case.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and especially for his powers of observation. The asterisks had been placed here because in the past, as you will know, there have been relatively modest number of meetings of the CW Committee without interpretation, and this is merely a way of highlighting that those meetings in the CW Committee will all have interpretation, just like all the other meetings appearing on the timetable for the week 20-24 June. I do thank ambassador Batsanov for his powers of observation, because I think this was a good opportunity to solve the problem.

As I announced at the outset of this plenary meeting, the Conference will hold an informal meeting to substantive issues under agenda item 5. I have no further business, and I will consequently adjourn this plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday next, possibly meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday 22 June, if there are speakers on the list. If not, the plenary meeting will take place on Thursday, 24 June at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.